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ABSTRACT

This volume, first in a series, contains a literature review of the college access field, as well as case studies and lessons for community leaders interested in designing or reforming college access programs. The college access field contains many well thought out programs that are widely believed to be effective in helping minority and low-income youth overcome barriers in their efforts to get to college. For the most part, these beliefs have not been based on the kind of social science evaluation techniques usually believed necessary to demonstrate program effectiveness. Conduct of a sophisticated analysis of CollegeBound (Baltimore, Maryland) operations and outcomes, site visits and analyses of six urban college access programs, and a review of the literature on college access programs leads to three basic conclusions. The Baltimore CollegeBound program evaluation provides the best empirical evidence that a college access program can have a demonstrable impact on college attendance for some types of students at some types of programs. A second conclusion is that, to be successful, a college access program must reflect the existing realities and relationships within school systems and between school systems and communities. It is therefore both inappropriate and misleading to look for one best way to design and carry out college access activities or to rank order programs. A third conclusion is that in the Baltimore CollegeBound program the benefits far outweigh program costs. Findings from this report are used to make specific recommendations to the Baltimore program, and recommendations for college access programs in other cities that center on improved cooperation, access to information, networking, and research to improve these programs through a variety of approaches. (SLD)

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A NEW FIELD EMERGES: COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMS

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Prepared for The Baltimore Community Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland

Authors: Lawrence Neil Bailis, Andrew Hahn, Paul Aaron, Jennifer Nahas, Tom Leavitt

Brandeis University, Center for Human Resources, Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies, Waltham, MA

June 1995

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This study was commissioned by the Baltimore Community Foundation through a grant from the Ford Foundation.

The study was conducted by a team of researchers from Brandeis University's Center for Human Resources, Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies, over 16 months.

- Volume I in the series, *A New Field Emerges* contains a literature review of the college access field, as well as case studies and lessons for community leaders interested in designing or reforming college access programs.

- A brief video tape, designed as ethnographic documentation, compliments the written results of our evaluation research. The video traces the trajectory of four Baltimore high school students as they deliberate and make decisions about college.

- The results of the external evaluation of CollegeBound are reported in Volume II, *The Baltimore CollegeBound Foundation: Lessons from an External Evaluation.*

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> Education, particularly at the college level, is one of the few ways to break the cycle of poverty and dependency that exists in Baltimore City. We owe it both to our inner city youth and our community to support organizations like CollegeBound.
>
> – Corporate Business Leader

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

America prides itself about equality of opportunity. But in an era in which college education is widely seen as the gateway to personal fulfillment and job opportunities, it is troubling that studies continue to show that minority high school students and other low income youth do not attend colleges at the same rate as their white, higher income counterparts.

In the past fifteen years, educators, business leaders, and others have devised hundreds of *college access* programs to overcome this problem. This report reviews the lessons that have been learned from some of these promising efforts, concentrating upon Baltimore's CollegeBound program and, to a lesser extent, a group of related college access programs in Boston, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale), Cleveland, Columbus, Dade County (Miami), and Philadelphia.

The college access field contains many well thought out programs that are widely believed to be effective in helping minority and low-income youth to overcome the barriers they face in efforts to go to college. However, for the most part, these beliefs have not been based upon the kind of social science evaluation techniques that are widely considered to be necessary to prove program effectiveness. Conduct of a sophisticated analysis of CollegeBound operations and outcomes, site visits and analyses of available data from six college access programs, and a review of the literature on college access programs has led the team of Brandeis University researchers to three basic conclusions:

- The Baltimore CollegeBound evaluation described in this report provides the best empirical evidence thus far that a college access program *can* have a demonstrable impact on college attendance for some types of students at some types of high schools.

- In order to be successful, a college access program must reflect the existing realities and relationships within school systems and between school systems and communities. It is therefore *inappropriate* and misleading to look for "one best way" to design and carry out college access activities or to "rank order" programs according to their models. Rather, it is important for the college access field to be aware of the range of approaches, to learn from one another through professional networks, and to support rigorous research on local programs. One can look to Baltimore's CollegeBound and to each of the other college access programs that we

studied in order to find ideas that have worked well in the school systems that have implemented them and that may achieve similar benefits in other settings. But ultimately, college access programs need to be tailored to the unique circumstances in each locality, including the current strengths and weaknesses of local school system, the availability of resources to support college access programming, and the unique opportunities that may be present as a result of talented individuals with the commitment necessary to fulfill the vision.

- One program studied—Baltimore's CollegeBound— significantly increases college-going rates above and beyond what would otherwise occur, thereby assisting young people to reach personal goals and to obtain other benefits of the college experience, such as increased earnings and jobs with career ladders. These benefits far outweigh program costs.

2.0 HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS ABOUT THE COLLEGE ACCESS FIELD

2.1 The College Access Challenge

The gap between available income and the costs of attending college has become larger, not smaller, for less affluent families over the past decade. Tuition is rising faster than inflation making the idea of going to college appear to be an unattainable goal toward which less affluent families become less and less likely to strive as its costs soar prohibitively high. Given this fact, it is not surprising that numerous studies have documented the fact that minority and other low-income high school students are considerably less likely to attend college than their white, middle-income counterparts for a variety of reasons, including the bleak financial outlook. For example, one study from the College Board (1990) concluded that low-income students attend college at only 61 percent of the rate of middle- and upper-income students and the gap between college completion rates for whites and minorities has grown wider.

These findings present a challenge to all Americans concerned with social equity. They set the stage and frame the purpose for college access programs. Implicit in college access programs (as defined in the following section) is an assumption entirely consistent with recent research findings on the efficacy of various kinds of training and education initiatives for low-income youth (Department of Labor, 1995). These reviews show that *there is no better return on human capital investment than a college degree.*

Summer jobs programs, after-school training, mentoring programs, work experience, tutoring, and community service programs all deal with a part of the challenge of raising expectations for the future, but none are as effective as simply making sure young people graduate from high school, go to college, and earn a college degree. The U.S. Department of Labor (1995) reports that in 1993, male high school graduates over age 24 earned an average of $23,100, which is significantly smaller than their peers who take advantage of post-secondary school opportunities. Students who obtain an Associates degree earn an average of $30,000 per year while those with a four-year college degree earn an average of $41,600. This differential has expanded over the past few decade. In 1979, a male college graduate between the ages of 25-34 earned 37 percent more than his peers with only a high school diploma, while in 1992, he could expect to earn 74 percent more. In addition to earnings, a college education increases the likelihood of being employed. The U.S. Department of

Education, Center for Education Statistics (1992) reports that in 1991, college graduates had a higher employment rate (91.8%) than those with only a high school diploma (84.9%) and higher still than those with less than a high school degree (69.1%). This report also shows that during economic recessions, such as those faced in the mid-1980s, the employment rates of males with 12 years of school or less dropped further than they did for college graduates. Data for women show comparable patterns. Together, these statistics show the benefits in terms of earnings and employment, that a young person can acquire by attending college. In addition to these, the benefits of a college experience and the merits of a program to encourage college attendance reach far beyond the economic impacts.

2.2 Overview of the College Access Field

Analysis of college access programs is complicated by the fact that a wide variety of programs with diverse service delivery models all bill themselves as facilitating or supporting college access. From mentoring projects to Boys and Girls Clubs, from Upward Bound to "I Have A Dream," from community-service to many "second-chance" programs—almost all youth-service initiatives include among their purposes preparing, assisting, or encouraging young people to aspire after, and achieve, post-secondary education. These goals are critically important for young people and for society; it is encouraging that there is such a wide range of programs which can be studied. In this report, we have chosen to focus on one type of program—college access. Because "college access" is not a trade name, nor does it have a set definition, its conceptual boundaries are loose enough to incorporate many approaches and interventions that range broadly in terms of scope and reach, nature of funding, auspices, and intensity of focus.

Studies conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO, 1990) and others suggest that these programs can be most productively thought of as falling into four broad categories:

- Sponsorship programs in which individuals and/or organizations guarantee full- or part-time tuition for participating students who meet certain performance criteria.

- University-based programs, where a selected group of students is helped through high school and then guaranteed their college tuition.

- Pay-for-grades programs, where students who meet performance expectations are given money for college tuition.

- Last dollar scholarship programs in which students receive counseling about college and assistance in obtaining financial aid, followed by an application process and, in some cases, an award of "last dollar grants." These grants provide payments of all or a fraction of the financial needs gap that remains between financial aid, contributions from parents and expected earnings on the one hand and expected expenses at college, on the other. The students who receive these grants are called "last dollar scholars" and they tend to be the focus of the subsequent program analyses reported in this summary.

While all of the preceding categories of programs have shown promise, this report focuses on the fourth category, programs that are often referred to as "last dollar programs."[1] We chose to focus on this category because it best reflects the nature of the Baltimore CollegeBound program. However, in order to remind the reader that our findings and conclusions are part of a family of approaches, we use the term "college access programs" throughout the report.

2.3 The Literature

We believe that the college access field has reached a point in its development where new, systematic joint efforts could (and should) be undertaken to review the ranges of alternatives that are available to local programs, and to assess the possible strengths and weaknesses of each variation as they would apply to different settings. Our research as reported in Volume I, *A New Field Emerges: College Access Programs—Lessons from Six Programs and A Review of the Literature* should be helpful in stimulating this kind of inquiry, by framing the key possibilities and summarizing some of the variations to date. A summary and comparison of city program profiles can be found in the "College Access Program Models" section below.

Four of the dimensions should be of particular interest to community leaders interested in replicating a college access program (with a special focus on last dollar scholarships), or in designing a new one from the ground up:

- *Mission*: Choosing between a direct-service approach and a systems-change approach. In other words, a college access program designer must clarify the extent to which the mission of the program is devoted exclusively towards promoting positive outcomes for students through its work with particular groups of students *and/or* whether part of its mission encompasses efforts to promote broader changes in the ways that the school system prepares young students for life after high school. This theme came up repeatedly in our interviews with college access leaders at all sites.

- *The role and centrality of the last dollar component*: Assessing the relative importance of the last dollar scholarship component and the extent to which resources should be devoted to this component, as opposed to supporting delivery of information about college life, counseling, and related services, is a critical choice for program designers. The empirical results from the Baltimore CollegeBound evaluation (Section 5.0) will be interesting and instructive in this regard.

- Finding the best way(s) to *measure success and promote continuous improvement*: What, for example, is the proper balance between quantitative and qualitative measures of success? In other words, to measure success should managers count the number of young people who take the SATs, apply for college, apply for a last dollar grant, or, should managers concentrate on

[1] The last dollar programs are defined broadly in this report, to include not only the financial assistance/scholarship, but also a range of services from presentations to students, one-on-one counseling about college, assisting with financial aid forms and college applications, to encouragement by advisors for students and their families.

less tangible ways that a program influences the students and their plans for the future? How does a program give support and credit to advisors, for example, who help with family problems? How can planners identify ways to make programmatic enrichments and management improvements as experience unfolds, yet stay true to the original mission of the program? This tension between relying on numbers to measure performance and considering other important aspects of a counselor's job plague all youth-service agencies. There are no easy answers, but recognizing the dilemma is often a positive first step.

- Deciding which *administrative structures* and procedures make the most sense for each program: Determining, for example, the relationship between the college advisement and fund-raising functions, and adoptions of specific management and fund-raising structures and approaches.

Perhaps the most fundamental issue that our review of the six programs raises is whether one views such programs as discrete, direct-services efforts to promote college attendance or as part of a broader school reform effort. While many programs lean in the latter direction, Philadelphia's has been explicit on this point. As one representative of that program put it, "We welcome the chance to get involved in a reform and institutional change agenda rather than just create more extra programs."

Where does student-focused service delivery end and advocacy for school reform begin? To what extent do they conflict, and to what extent do they complement each other? Based on the experience of College Access in Philadelphia, justice can be done to both purposes, even though considerable skill is needed among everyone in the organization in order to maintain a delicate balance. An official of the program believes that the college access agenda is big enough to encompass different strategies and different approaches:

> The day-to-day work in the school represents the bed-rock for whatever larger system-change agenda is pursued. The bottom-line is that we've got to be in the schools doing what we're doing. In terms of people respecting the opinion of what comes out of this organization, we've got the track record to have them sit up and take notice. That's what speaks loudest. This credibility then becomes the political capital used to invest in a broader enterprise of reform. I have never felt like, 'Oh, gee, I shouldn't be saying anything about why I think low-income minority students aren't sitting for SATs, or aren't being able to access college.' I couldn't *not* say those things. I'm not interested in running a pretty program with nice pictures.

The ongoing experiences of the Philadelphia college access program deserve continued attention because their experiences help to shed light on the opportunities and difficulties of an approach which places clear emphasis on promotion of institutional change.

2.4 Assessments of the Impact of College Access Programs

Most of the available material on college access programs is descriptive in nature. It is therefore not surprising that our own review of the literature, as well as that conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), the RAND Corporation, and the Center for Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD) have concluded that, while there is a considerable amount of program

experience in this field, there is a limited amount of sophisticated social science research available to test the underlying assumptions about the dynamics of college access and the effectiveness of specific programs in promoting college access.

Several barriers have been particularly powerful in preventing the development of definitive estimates of program impact:

- First of all, the studies typically lack comparison groups of similar students who did not receive program benefits, and this makes it impossible to be sure how much the outcomes can be attributed to the programs. In other words, although the numbers of young people who go to college can certainly be counted, one cannot uncover whether an intervention had an impact on their decision or not. Coupled with this is the paucity of data collected by most college access programs. Without information about students prior to participation in the program, it is, again, difficult to ascertain whether the programs actually made a difference.

- More subtly, staff of college access programs almost always note that it is impossible to capture the entire impact of their programs in quantitative data. They argue that their programs' impacts go beyond simple to measure things like graduation or college attendance. They cite their involvement in school improvement projects and their work with the families of counseled youth as equally important "outcomes" but hard to measure.

In the words of one college access staff person:

> I think it's the softer stuff, the nebulous stuff, which is harder to convey, but which is sometimes the heart and soul of what we do and the difference we make. It's things like the teacher who comes in and says, 'Well, you know, a couple of years ago I was really ready for you guys to walk out the door. But I see now that kids arrive at school and seek you out. You're giving something to students that they didn't have before.' How do you put a number on changes in attitudes and relationships?

Despite these limitations, some results are emerging that support the conclusion that last dollar programs can make a real difference in young peoples' lives. For example, a survey of post-program experiences of students from the Cleveland Scholarship Programs (CSP) shows that the grant recipients had higher high school graduation rates than the national average for similar students, and unusually high college attendance (91%) and college graduation rates (71%) for the CSP recipients.

3.0 COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM MODELS: RICH DIVERSITY

Our analyses of Baltimore CollegeBound data were supplemented by field visits to college access programs in Boston, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale), Cleveland, Columbus, Dade County (Miami), and Philadelphia, all of which include the Last Dollar Scholarship concept within their program models. These site visits and our review of available program documentation reveals that no two programs have chosen to organize themselves in the same way or to deliver precisely the

same types of services. Written responses to questions on program enrollment, budgets, endowments, number of scholarship applications received and scholarships offered, and financial aid leveraged from other sources by scholarship programs were provided by the programs.[2] Information on the 1993-94 school year is shown in Exhibit 1.

EXHIBIT 1

OVERVIEW OF COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM OPERATIONS IN SIX COMMUNITIES: 1993-1994

	Baltimore	Boston	Broward	Cleveland	Columbus	Dade County
Total number of high school students served by all program activities	12,201	3,000	23,808	4,727	2,900	30,000
Total high school population	23,906	16,300	45,531	43,795	14,993	77,000
Total number of high school seniors served	1,585	2,500	11,066	4,727	1,500	13,000
Total number of seniors	3,536	3,100	11,066	7,877	2,643	15,000
Number of advisors	3FT/3PT	5 FT	4FT/18PT	26 PT	17 PT	24FT/20PT
Total budget for all activities (000s)	$876	$634	$523	$2,419	$1,200	$16,000
Total endowment (000s)	$9,274	$6,740	NA	$1,097	$8,000	$1,000
Number of last dollar grant applications*	957	1005	874	4,802	2,485	1,494
Number of last dollar scholars**	198	161	98	1,857	985	715
Percent of applications that were successful	21	16	11	39	40	50
Total last dollar funds awarded (000s)	$253	$111	$110	$1,084	$911	$746
Average last dollar grant size	$1,280	$620	$1,126	$584	$924	$934
Total financial aid from other sources leveraged by the program for scholars (000s)	$1,685	$888	$17	$16,260	$11,831	$774

* These numbers include new and continuing grant applications, both full and partial, except for Broward County which offers one-year grants only and Boston which includes new applicants only.

** These numbers include new and continuing last dollar scholars, except for Broward County and Boston which includes new scholars only.

[2] Although Philadelphia provided extensive information during the study and participated fully in site visits, program managers were not able to respond to our written survey due to time constraints.

The 1993-94 performance of the six sites can be summarized as follows:

- The five college access programs for which we have enrollment information served a total of more than 76,600 high school students. This represents 35 percent of the high school students in the school districts served by these programs.

- The five programs served 34,378 seniors, 80 percent of the 43,222 seniors in their school districts. The percentage of seniors served ranged from 45 percent in Baltimore to 100 percent in Broward County.

- The total budget in the six college access programs was $21.7 million, of which $3.2 million (15 percent) went to last dollar scholarships.

- The programs received 11,617 last dollar grant applications and had 4,014 scholars on their rolls.

- Average last dollar scholarship size ranged from a low of $584 in Cleveland to $1,126 in Broward County and $1,280 in Baltimore.

- The six sites claim to have leveraged a total of $31.5 million in financial aid from other sources. The amount leveraged varied greatly in the sites -- from only $17,000 in Broward County to $16.3 million in Cleveland. The large difference suggests that respondents had different definitions for what constitutes leveraged funds.

3.1 Scholarship Renewal and College Performance

3.1.1 Scholarship Renewal Rates

We attempted to gather data on the percentage of last dollar scholarship recipients who renewed their scholarships in the second year of college. We were also interested in exploring the college performance of last dollar scholars in terms of college retention and graduation rates, as well as grade point averages. Some of the sites were unable to provide this information because they had not been providing scholarships for a long enough period of time. Others did not keep records on this type of information. We do, however, have some preliminary information from the programs in Boston, Columbus, and Baltimore.

In Boston, there was a very high rate of second year scholarship renewal. Boston reported a high of 97 percent from the class of 1989 and a low of 85 percent for the class of 1990. Other classes were between these: 92 percent for the classes of 1986 and 1987 and 89 percent for the class of 1988. The situation in Columbus was very different. The highest renewal rate reported for Columbus was 56 percent (class of 1988) and the lowest was only 17 percent (class of 1989). Thirty-two percent of the class of 1990 renewed their scholarships for the second year. The variability between the sites and between the years suggest that programs treat second year renewals very differently. Specific reasons for these differences cannot be inferred from the data submitted by the programs in Boston and Columbus, however more extensive and descriptive data was collected for the Baltimore CollegeBound program.

In Baltimore, the renewal process involves submitting documentation including semester grades, SAR forms, and FAAL forms, as well as maintaining a 2.0 grade point average and completing volunteer hours in the community to be eligible for a continuation of the grant. A relatively high number of last dollar scholars did *not* submit the documentation required for grant renewal, thus were not eligible to receive support for another year. As of September 1994, 76 students were missing documentation from the 1990 to 1993 cohorts or 45 percent of all scholars who had received freshman year scholarships.

These numbers are a concern for CollegeBound staff, so a special survey of those who did not renew their scholarships was conducted by the Brandeis research team. Results suggest that in addition to "left college" there were two overarching reasons why the scholars did not submit their documentation for scholarship renewal. Many were not aware of the eligibility requirements so assumed that they could not renew; a few had experienced a communication breakdown between themselves and CollegeBound staff or the college financial aid office and CollegeBound staff. These results suggest that if college access programs wish to continue to offer grants to last dollar recipients, staff need to pay particular attention to ensuring that an open line of communication is available and that scholars and financial aid offices are aware of the program's purposes as well as documentation and eligibility requirements.

3.1.2 Graduation Rates, Attrition, and Grade Point Averages

In terms of performance in college, Boston and Columbus provided data on the percent of scholarship recipients attending four-year colleges who graduated within five years. In Boston, 62 percent of the scholars from the class of 1986 had graduated, 62 percent from the class of 1987, 53 percent from the class of 1988, 34 percent from the class of 1989, and only 9 percent from the class of 1990. Clearly, a downward trend in graduation rates was experienced with the Boston last dollar scholars. However, it should be noted that the data for 1989 and 1990 may be artificially low, due to a lag in the records. Information for only two of the class cohorts were available from Columbus. Seventy-two percent of the class of 1988 and 35 percent of the class of 1989 had graduated within five years.

Although data on graduation rates were not collected in Baltimore (the program is too young), other measures were employed to explore the college performance and experience of the Baltimore last dollar scholars. Comparisons between the last dollar scholars and other Baltimore high school graduates attending the same colleges indicate that the last dollar scholars had higher retention rates between 1989 and 1993 than comparable students. For example, none of the last dollar scholars who entered Morgan State since 1990 dropped out of college, while data shows that between 16 and 31 out of every 100 Baltimore City high school students dropped out during the first three years. Similarly, the college attrition rate (1989-1993) for University of Maryland, Baltimore County was only 17 percent for last dollar scholars compared to an estimated 47 percent dropout rate for comparable Baltimore students. These findings suggest that the scholars are more likely to stay in college once they go than a group of comparable students.

Data were also collected for the Baltimore program to determine whether last dollar scholars had higher grade point averages than a comparable group of students from Baltimore high schools. Data show that although the last dollar scholars tend to earn slightly more credits and had slightly higher GPAs than their peers, these trends did not hold true for every cohort. Thus, there is little evidence on achievement in Baltimore favoring last dollar scholars.

The data presented above are limited and the conclusions reached are tentative due to the fact that few of the programs were able to provide all the information. The trends, though, are worth noting. Managers of college access programs should consider collecting detailed records on scholarship renewal, last dollar scholar graduation rates, and performance of the last dollar scholars in college. Data in these areas will help program managers and funders begin to explore the relationship between the receipt of a last dollar scholarship and students' college experience. A commitment to collecting longitudinal data on scholars' performance in college and graduation rates may also be a way to formalize the mechanism or process for keeping in touch with scholarship recipients. The programs will benefit in terms of having (and measuring) an identifiable impact and the last dollar scholars will benefit by the additional "support"—financial and motivational—they may receive throughout their college careers.

3.2 Demographics

We asked the six sites for demographic data on last dollar recipients for the 1993-1994 school year. All except Dade County were able to provide us with this information. Data for the five sites are shown in Exhibit 2 (gender) and Exhibit 3 (race/ethnicity).

Females constituted a substantial majority of scholarship recipients in each of the five sites. Two-thirds of recipients were female in Boston, Columbus, and Cleveland compared to 72 percent in Broward County and 78 percent in Baltimore.

Race/ethnicity patterns are quite different in the five sites. Blacks are a large majority of last dollar recipients in Baltimore (87 percent) and a small majority in Columbus (54 percent). In contrast, whites are the largest group in Broward County (48 percent). In Cleveland, 92 percent of recipients are Black or white and are nearly equally represented (47 percent are Black and 45 percent are white). Asians are the largest group of recipients in Boston by a small margin over Blacks. Hispanics are well represented only in Boston (15 percent) and Broward County (13 percent).

3.3 Trends

We examined trends in three program characteristics over the 1989-1994 period: the number of last dollar applications; the number of last dollar recipients; and the amount of last dollar funds awarded. These trends are shown in Exhibits 4, 5, and 6.

In most sites, there was a slight upward trend upward in the number of last dollar applications received (Exhibit 4). The exception was in Baltimore, where the peak year for applications was 1991-92 and in Columbus and Boston, where there was a slight decline in the last year. The Cleveland site received approximately twice as many applications as Columbus, the site that received the next largest number of applications, and approximately four times as many applications as the other sites.

The pattern is similar for the number of last dollar recipients (Exhibit 5); the number of recipients generally increased during the five year period. The exceptions were in Columbus and Broward County. In Columbus the number of recipients went down in the last year, while in Broward County the number of scholarship recipients fluctuated throughout the five-year period. Cleveland had substantially more recipients than other sites in each of the five school years.

The pattern of total last dollar funds awarded is somewhat more complex than the other two patterns (Exhibit 6). The trend in funds awarded was up through the five-year period in Baltimore, Dade County, and Cleveland. The amount of funds awarded increased except for the last school year in Columbus and Broward County. Funds awarded stayed at approximately the same level throughout the five-year period in Boston. The Cleveland and Columbus programs awarded substantially more funds than the other sites, due in part to the infusion of state funding.

3.4 Program Designs, Administrative Structures, and Procedures

As is summarized in Exhibits 7 through 9, we documented a wide range of alternative program designs, administrative structures and procedures that have been adopted by college access/last dollar scholarship programs. Our research revealed that for the most part, each of the programs felt that their program designs and administrative structures made sense in terms of the historical relationships among different organizations in their community and the constraints that they were operating under. But we also learned that programs were not always aware of the variations on the approaches that had been adopted by others and they did not argue that their own approaches would necessarily be best for everyone.

EXHIBIT 2
FEMALE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:1993-94

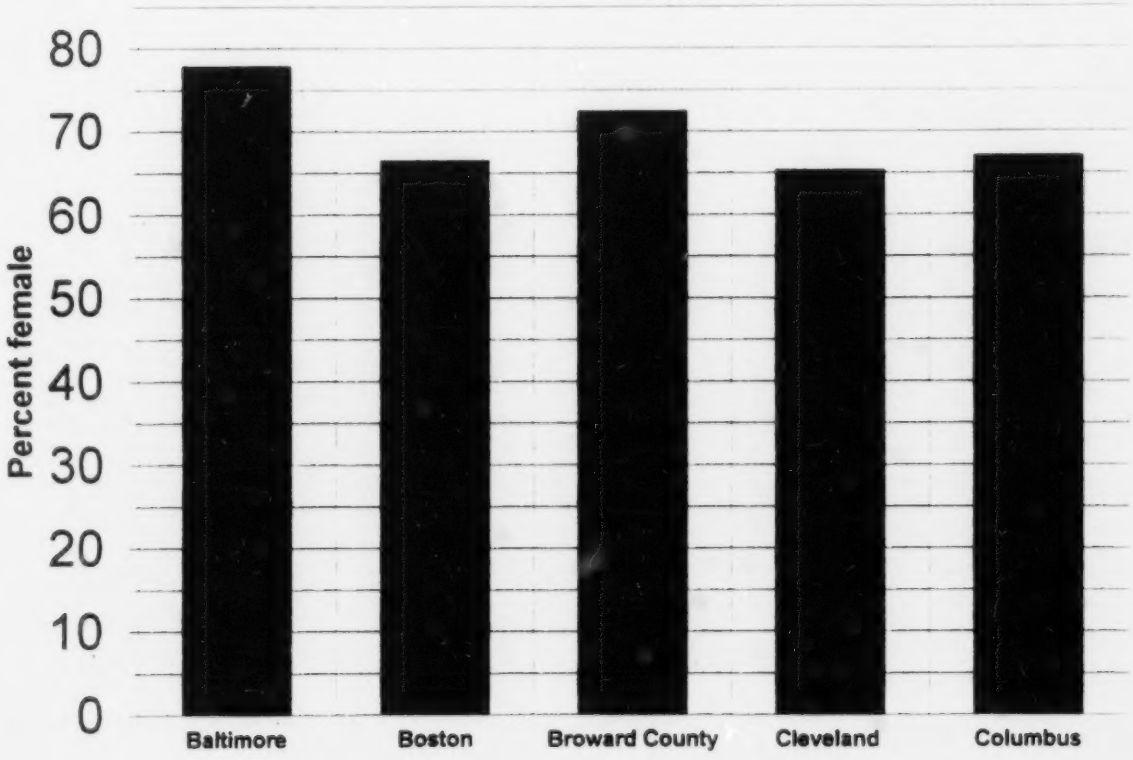

EXHIBIT 3
RACE/ETHNICITY BY SITE: 1993-1994

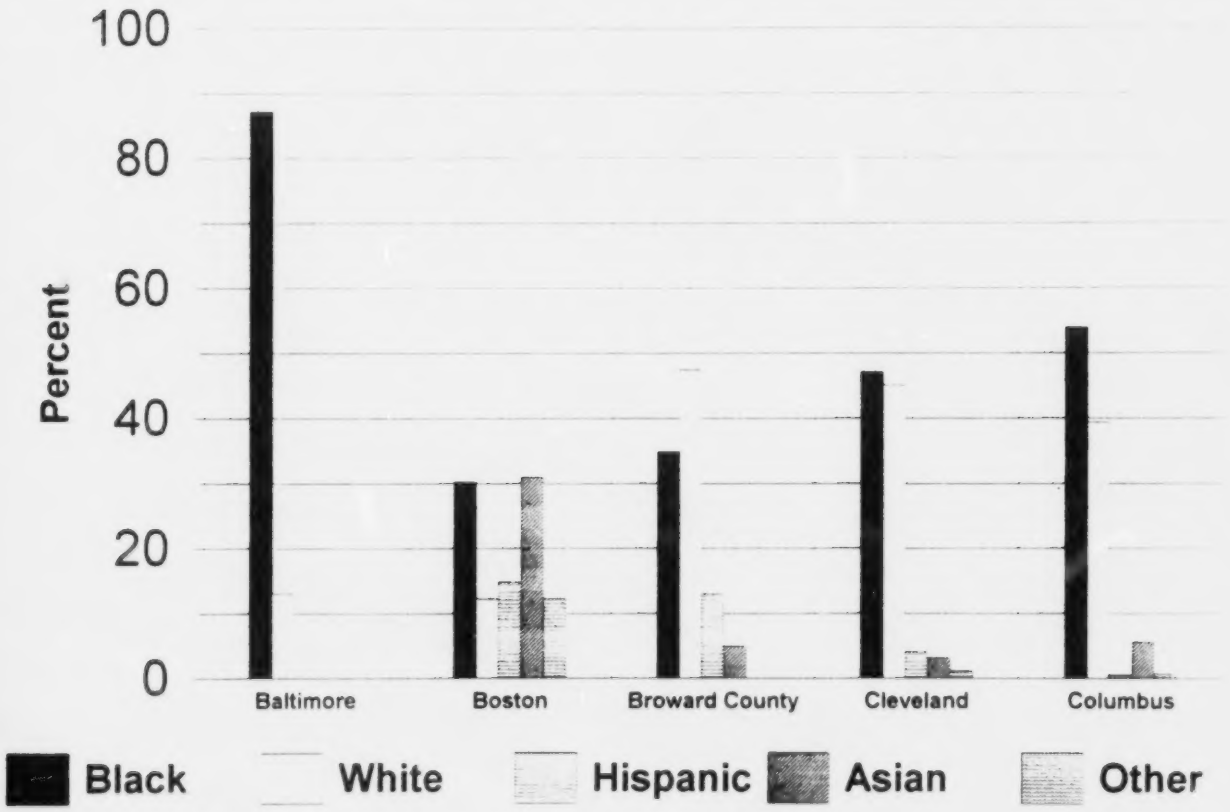

EXHIBIT 4
LAST DOLLAR APPLICATIONS: 1989-1994

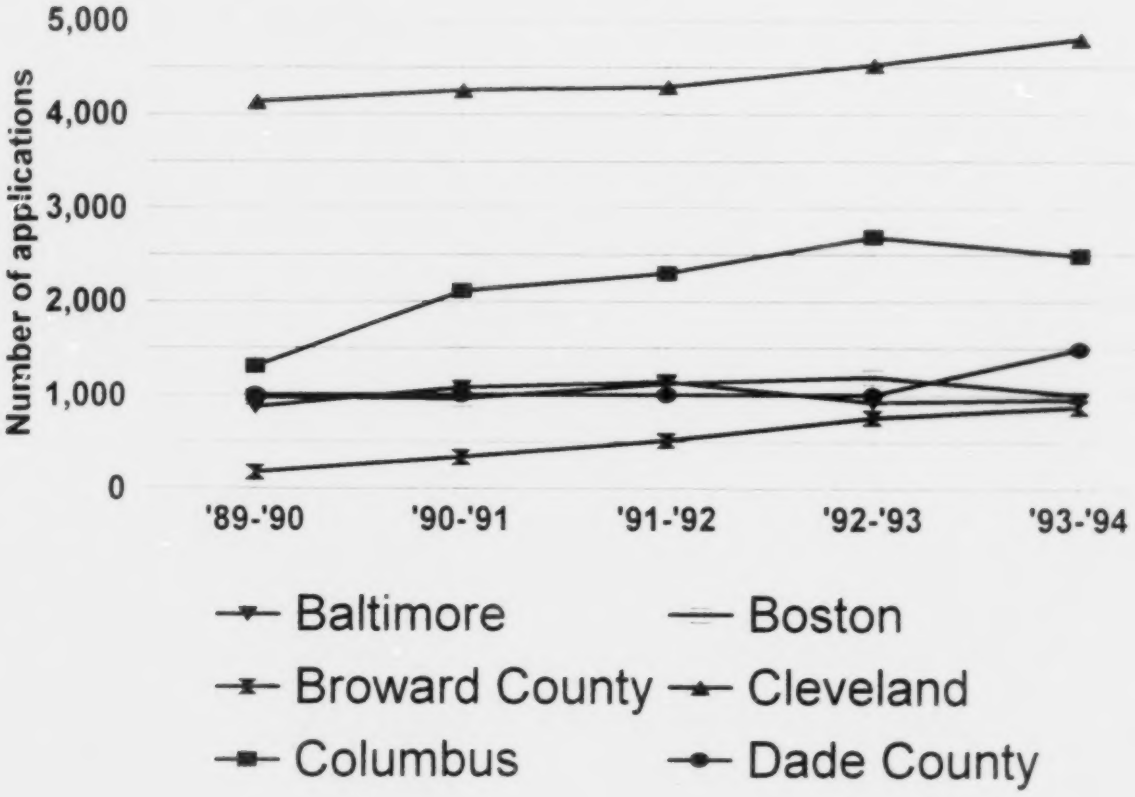

EXHIBIT 5
LAST DOLLAR RECIPIENTS: 1989-1994

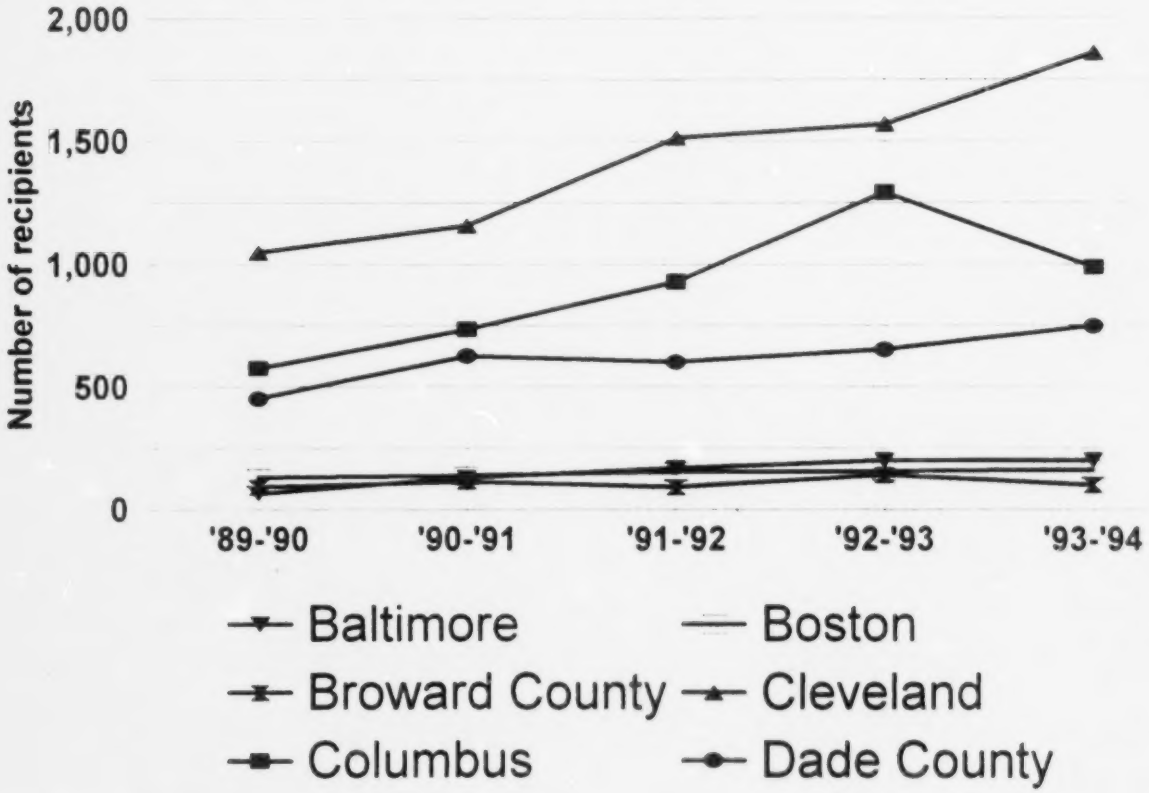

EXHIBIT 6
LAST DOLLAR FUNDS AWARDED: 1989-94

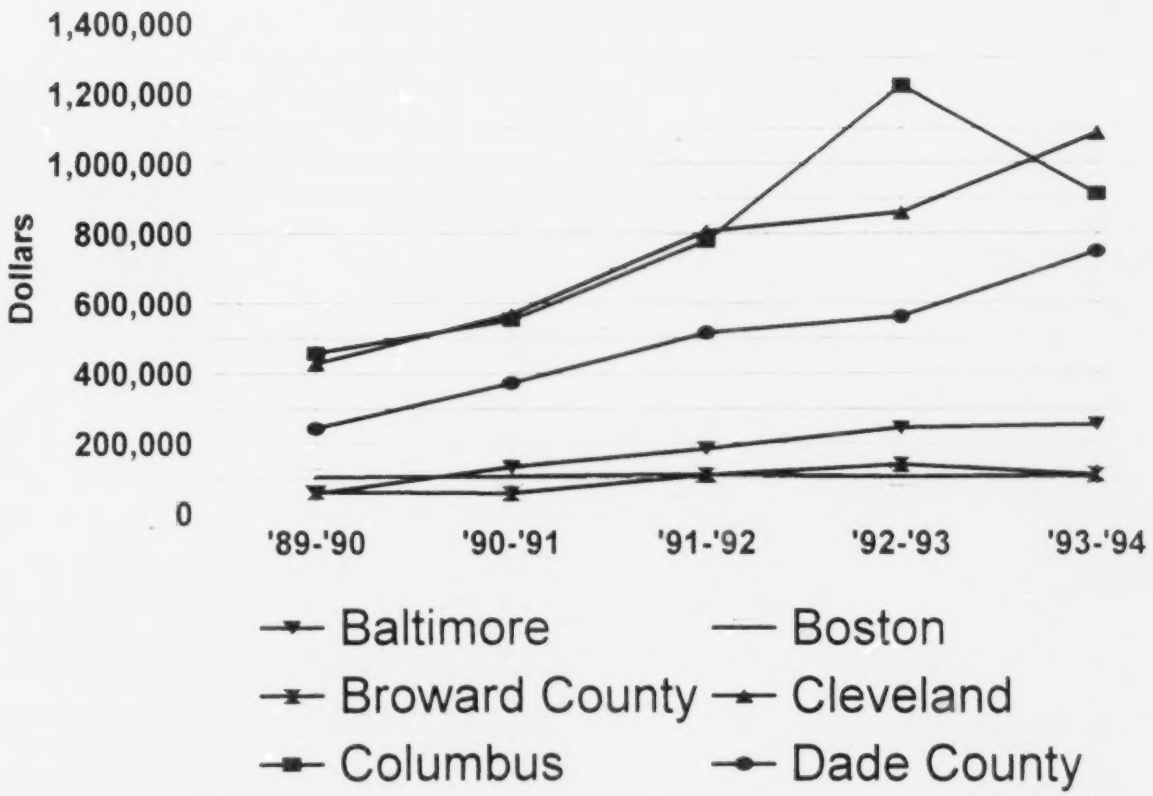

EXHIBIT 7

OVERVIEW OF SEVEN COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	AFFILIATED WITH	NOTABLE CHARACTERISTICS
Baltimore CollegeBound program (Maryland)	--	• Citywide scope—Serves 15 citywide and neighborhood high schools • Advisors are employees of CollegeBound Foundation • Funded in part by $9.2 million endowment
Boston ACCESS program (Massachusetts)	Boston Plan for Excellence	• Citywide scope • Five advisors, employed by ACCESS, spend one day per week in the schools • Funded through an endowment • Meets only a fraction of last dollar gap
Broward County Advisors for Continuing Education (BRACE) programs (Fort Lauderdale, FL)	Broward County Public Schools	• Citywide scope—Serves all 22 high schools, 2 voc/tech centers and 2 adult ed. centers in county • Advisors are school employees • Extensive fund-raising
Cleveland Scholarship Programs (Ohio)	--	• Oldest, best-funded college access program • Citywide scope—Covers 50 schools in city and suburbs • Advisors are CSP employees (26 in fifty schools) • Focus on special target populations • Focus on skills building
Columbus "I Know I Can" Program (Ohio)	--	• Citywide scope • Advisors are volunteers • Focus on all students with active outreach to all high school seniors • Last Dollar Grants are funded though interest from a $9 million endowment
Dade County College Assistance Program (CAP) (Miami, FL)	Dade County Public Schools	• Full-time advisors 5 days a week in all 26 schools in the county • Advisors employed by school system • Extensive fund-raising activities • Citywide scope
Philadelphia College Access Program (Pennsylvania)	Philadelphia School Collaborative	• Citywide scope • Advisors ("Coordinators") are employed by College Access • Focus on families • Uses neighborhood-based community centers • Emphasis on systems change as well as one-on-one help • Funded by Pew Foundation—part of the Philadelphia Schools Collaborative—and the William Penn Foundation

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EXHIBIT 8

PROMISING PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES

FUNCTION	PROMISING APPROACHES	COMMENTS
Broad Strategies	• Focusing on student outcomes • Focusing on school reform	These are really poles on a continuum rather than alternatives
Early Intervention	• Linkage with programs in elementary and middle schools • Including services for 9th and 10th graders	There is a growing recognition of the importance of early interventions, but costs and service fragmentation across school levels (elementary, middle and high) often represent the major constraints on extensive programming with younger youth
Counseling/ Advising	• Pro-active approaches in which advisors meet one-on-one with each 12th grader rather than responding to student initiative • Trying to motivate students in a serious way (e.g., more outreach in schools and in home visits) as well as serving those who are already motivated	These approaches are seen as useful, but as in early intervention, they entail additional costs
College Awareness	• Visits to local colleges, including the option of summer residential experience	With good case management and support from colleges and others, the cost of this need not be prohibitive
Financial Aid	• Financial aid information hot-lines	Technology can not replace the importance of good face-to-face counseling but it can provide a useful cost-effective supplement
Last Dollar Funding	• Offering multiple year support as long as the student is making good academic progress • Providing larger grants	These approaches would be more widely adopted if funds were available
Post-Program Support	• Student retention initiatives involving mentors and "campus representatives" • Annual phone-a-thons to reach last dollar scholars while they are in college	The biggest barrier to this kind of extensive follow-up involves funding, the limited nature of college access programs (i.e., not a "cradle to grave effort") and the feeling among some that post-program support should be someone else's program

EXHIBIT 9

PROMISING ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

FUNCTION	PROMISING APPROACHES	COMMENTS
Support of Advisors	• Using volunteers • Using foundation-supported advisors • Using school department-funded advisors	There is no systematic evidence available of the pros and cons of each of these, but given the costs involved, this should be a high priority topic for local researchers and community leaders
Fund-Raising	• Getting commitments for matching (or more than matching) grants from local colleges and universities • Payroll deductions • Superintendent's galas and other events • Separate fund-raising for administrative costs so that major fund-raising efforts can promote that "every dollar goes to scholarship" • Building in feedback to donors from individual scholarship recipients • Permitting donors to specify types of students to be funded	All of these seem worthy of consideration by any last dollar program All but the last would seem relatively non-controversial
Targeting	• Serving non-public schools • Serving suburban schools	Both seem reasonable if sufficient funds are available to support them
Relationships with School Personnel	• Sharing credit for all outcomes with others in the schools • Using job titles other than "counselor"	Both seem sensible and don't cost a penny
Relationships with parents and "the community"	• Incorporating "community centers" in which advisors work part-time	This is another approach that appears to have paid off where it was tried, but is requires either diminishment of advisor time in schools and/or additional funds
Relationships with Other Programs	• Working closely with other school reform/ financial aid programs and community groups	This enables a program to serve more people and provide more financial aid than they would otherwise be in a position to offer
Growth Patterns	• Starting small in a few schools and expanding only as other schools exhibit "demand"	This is an attractive idea whose only downside is limiting the numbers of students who are exposed to last dollar opportunities in the short run
Evaluation	a) Systemic follow-up of the experiences of last dollar scholars (and comparison groups) over time b) Ongoing monitoring of key stakeholders' views and perceptions c) A well-thought out, comprehensive management information system that captures the extent of contacts between staff and students d) Treating numbers as only one indicator of overall goal achievement	These are all sensible ideas. The first (a) can be expensive to implement and the others much less so.

4.0 OVERVIEW OF BALTIMORE'S COLLEGEBOUND PROGRAM

In the broadest sense, the goal for the CollegeBound Foundation is to increase the number of Baltimore high school students who apply, enroll, attend and graduate from college. The vehicle for meeting these goals is through CollegeBound's service—counseling and scholarships. These services, according to the College Bound literature, "help students overcome the barriers that keep them from continuing their education." CollegeBound states its mission simply:

> We provide career counseling and academic planning. We pay for SATs, application fees and entrance exams. We show 9th and 10th graders that college is a reality and encourage them to stay in school. We guide students through the complicated process of applying for scholarships, loans, grants and other financial aid programs. When loans and grants fall short, we use our own funds to make up the difference.

The focus of the CollegeBound program is to motivate students in the early grades to consider college as an option for their future through in-class presentations to 9th and 10th graders by CollegeBound advisors. Once students enter the 11th grade, CollegeBound gets involved in helping them meet the requirements for the college application process including taking the college entrance exams (SATs or ACTs) at least once. CollegeBound encourages students to apply to several different colleges and helps them to navigate the financial aid process, as well as providing last dollar financing to college bound Baltimore City Public School seniors.

All of these goals are met through three clusters of activities: (1) group or classroom presentations to students about the importance of going on to higher education and the steps necessary to achieve this; (2) counseling and advising on an individual basis about each step in the process; and (3) awards, in some cases, of financial aid through last dollar scholarships.

Implicit in this mission is the fact that CollegeBound *generally* (but not exclusively) serves those students who are already in a sense college bound. While the program attempts, in modest ways (i.e., presentations to everyone) to motivate every student to pursue a college degree, the real heart of what CollegeBound is about, and the bulk of its resources, are devoted to working with students who have some idea (often an unshaped one) that they should think about college.

5.0 HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS FROM AN EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE BALTIMORE COLLEGEBOUND PROGRAM

Our evaluation of Baltimore's CollegeBound program included two inter-related efforts: a qualitative effort involving interviews and focus groups with key actors and a quantitative effort to assemble and analyze data that would enable us to determine whether the program was indeed making an impact on the lives of the young people who chose to participate.

5.1 Qualitative Analysis of CollegeBound Operations

Interviews with CollegeBound managers and staff, high school students, Baltimore school officials, including the superintendent, teachers, guidance counselors, and other high school staff, have led to the following findings:

- CollegeBound's clear and unambiguous mission brings it respect and understanding. While other programs promote lofty goals through uncertain

means, CollegeBound appeals to stakeholders because of its straightforward goals.

- CollegeBound is aptly named since its structure and work suggest decisions to work with high school students who show at least a modicum of motivation and are, therefore, presumably college bound with the added push and resources, that the program provides.

- There is a healthy tension in college access programs between providing useful tangible services to individuals and engaging in a variety of activities to change the very fabric of schools. To the extent that it occurs, the "systemic change agenda" is mostly a secondary element of CollegeBound although it is a topic of interest among the leadership of the program, funders and board members.

- College access programs throughout the country are continuing to fine tune their efforts with respect to such issues as relationship with the community, the necessary qualifications of staff, and outreach to families. CollegeBound is described in many interviews as a program that has not yet developed a broad base of public support from community groups, families with limited incomes and others. Instead, it is seen as a non-profit with close and effective relationships with schools and business leaders.

- Finally, there is a tension around developing appropriate performance standards to monitor program activity.

  -- On the one hand, CollegeBound's outcomes are straightforward and have led to clear methods of accountability, such as number of presentations given, number of counseling sessions held, students helped with financial aid forms, last dollar aid given out, and young people going to college.

  -- However, relatively little attention has been paid to measuring vital aspects of CollegeBound's work with youth such as counseling around motivational issues.

Overall, the results of the qualitative analysis of CollegeBound are quite encouraging. CollegeBound's mission is clear to all key stakeholders, and it has delivered on the mission in a serious and impressive manner, as is demonstrated in the next section.

5.2 Statistical Analysis of CollegeBound Program Operations and Outcomes

Statistical analysis of data on the college attendance status of more than 400 former Baltimore high school seniors one year after their scheduled graduation from high school and additional data on their high school performance (including their grades and attendance rates) yields a complex picture:

- Raw data demonstrate that those seniors who availed themselves of CollegeBound services such as counseling and/or initiated an application for

a last dollar scholarship were more likely to be enrolled in a four-year college one year after graduation. For example:

- -- All but two, out of 59, of the last dollar scholars were attending a four-year college full-time in the spring and early summer of 1994, one year after they graduated from high school;

- -- Those students who were counseled by a CollegeBound advisor and who initiated an application for a last dollar scholarship (but who did not receive a last dollar scholarship) were still nearly three times more likely to attend college than the students who had done neither.

- These differences disappear when such factors as gender, race, grades, absences (taken as a proxy for motivation), and type of school attended (city-wide versus zone/neighborhood) are held constant.[5]

- However, the results are more encouraging when the analyses are confined to the neighborhood schools.[6] In particular, *the data show that those students who received counseling from a CollegeBound advisor and who initiated an application for a last dollar scholarship while at the neighborhood schools were considerably more likely to attend college and continue through to the end of their freshman year than those neighborhood school students who did not engage in these CollegeBound activities. This relationship persists even when race, gender, grades in the senior year, and number of absences in the senior year are controlled for in the statistical analyses.*

This is the first evidence reported, we believe, of the net impacts of a college access program, using logistic regression to hold constant other variables which could influence college attendance. In other words, these results begin to show the actual impact that CollegeBound programs have on the youth that they serve.

5.3 Assessment of the Key Elements of the CollegeBound Model

The study team combined qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques in order to determine which elements of the CollegeBound model were most and least effective. While it was not possible to develop definitive conclusions on this topic, several patterns did emerge:

- Not surprisingly, CollegeBound appears to have worked the best in those instances in which there was concerted interaction between CollegeBound advisors and participating students. The *counseling* and *assistance in filling out financial aid forms* are highly personalized activities, thus the actual services vary somewhat from advisor to advisor and from student to student. *However,*

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[5] Analysis was conducted using Logistic Regression. Descriptions of the procedures and variables used are provided in Volume 2, Chapter 6 of this series.

[6] The neighborhood or zone schools are distinguished from the citywide schools in this analysis.

in general, our data suggest that a "light touch" of simply hearing a presentation or having one or two one-on-one counseling sessions does not appear to make much difference for students unless it is followed up with more sessions.

- *Last dollar scholarships* are the defining characteristics of CollegeBound, but the timing of the awards and the limitations on available funding mean that their potential impact is limited in terms of helping large numbers of students make the decisions to seriously consider going to college, applying, filling out financial aid forms, and actually going to college.

- The *prospect* of getting a last dollar scholarship may turn out to be a more effective incentive than the actual receipt of such a scholarship.

- *Coordination* between CollegeBound and school staff, other community organizations and programs was good in some areas and left room for improvement in others:

  -- Coordination between CollegeBound advisors and regular school staff was generally high, as a result of priority attention to this issue on the part of CollegeBound staff.

  -- However, coordination between CollegeBound activities and other school-based and community-based efforts to promote retention in high school, career counseling, and transitions from school to work is uneven at best, and thus should be the focus of attention. Additional attention, as noted previously, also needs to be directed to the issue of the extent to which CollegeBound should become involved in broader school reform efforts.

- In terms of program administration, CollegeBound management should consider developing and promoting *additional opportunities for professional development* activities for CollegeBound advisors.

5.4 Opinions of Program Participants

Conversations with CollegeBound students and analyses of opinions of students that were expressed in our one-year follow-up survey show that *participants in CollegeBound almost invariably say that they have benefited from this experience*:

- Nearly four in every five students indicated that their contacts with College-Bound advisors had been helpful in learning about college, selecting colleges, and applying for financial aid.

- About nineteen of every twenty students indicated that they were satisfied with their CollegeBound experience, including roughly two-thirds who said that they were very satisfied.

5.5 Academic Performance and Drop-out Rates While in College

A complex relationship emerges when the in-college performance of Baltimore last dollar scholars (i.e., the recipients of the scholarships) are compared with similar students who came come from Baltimore City but were not involved in the program.[7] Analysis of data from those colleges which attract the most scholars shows that:

- The last dollar scholars are less likely to drop out of college than their non-participant counterparts from the same Baltimore high schools, but
- The scholars are *not* likely to achieve higher grade point averages than the comparison group of Baltimore students attending the same schools.

5.6 Cost Benefit Analysis

College access programs like CollegeBound can be highly cost-effective, even if only a small percentage of high school students go on to college and graduate as a result of their efforts. This is because the cost per participant tends to be quite low (just over $600 per participant in the case of CollegeBound) while the benefits to those who are helped are tremendous.

CollegeBound's cost per participant, combined with information from a study on the returns on investment in higher education for African-Americans, shows a two-for-one dollar return on the investment in CollegeBound, even if the program results in only one additional college graduate per hundred students served. If the program results in five additional college graduates per 100 students served, the return on investment is $11 for each dollar spent. These returns expand as more and more students attend college who would not have without CollegeBound.

Clearly, the return on investment for spending now to encourage college attendance and retention will yield a hefty pay-off in the future. Benefits extend not only to the young people themselves in terms of higher earnings, employment, and personal enrichment, but the more young people attending college will also be beneficial for society. The changing economy and increase in jobs which demand higher-level thinking and analytical skills will require a workforce that is adequately prepared—and this increasingly means college educated. CollegeBound's cost-benefit analysis is encouraging in this respect.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The need for college access programs is growing as college tuition continues to rise in public and private colleges alike, and as the gap between income and the costs of attending college becomes larger, not smaller, over time. There is widespread belief that many of the existing college access programs are effective. But there is very little research meeting minimal standards of social science

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[7] These "similar students who did not receive scholarships" will be referred to as the "comparison group." This term is used to describe groups who are as similar as possible in terms of race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other important variables, to those who received the scholarships. We restricted this part of our analysis to colleges in Maryland with the highest proportions of CollegeBound students.

evaluation in the 1990s that can demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs as a whole or of specific elements of the programs.

Altogether, we have drawn four major conclusions from the national review of college access/last dollar programs and the in-depth look at the Baltimore CollegeBound program:

- Analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data supports the conclusion that Baltimore's CollegeBound is making a major difference in the lives of the neighborhood school students who receive a "heavy dose" of its services, and having little or no impact on other Baltimore high school students who attend the most competitive and college-focused high schools already.

- CollegeBound funders and managers should seriously consider taking steps to concentrate program activities in the neighborhood schools where it is apparently making the most difference, and to find ways to encourage a higher proportion of students to become more actively involved, i.e., to receive a "heavy dose" of its services. (CollegeBound currently serves the citywide schools approximately one day per week).

- When properly focused and fine-tuned, programs like CollegeBound can be an excellent investment of funds from the business community and others with interest in promoting community development and economic growth.

- Further attention needs to be placed on the post-high school experiences of CollegeBound students—both last dollar scholars and others—in order to learn whether more can be done to maximize the likelihood that those Baltimore high school students who enter college will eventually graduate. Early evidence on this question is encouraging.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and conclusions presented in this report lead to recommendations for two different audiences: (a) those who are directly associated with CollegeBound and (b) those who fund or operate (or would like to operate) college access programs nation-wide.

7.1 Recommendations Pertaining to CollegeBound

The track record of the Baltimore CollegeBound program to date suggests that it would be beneficial for those who fund and operate the program to explore several possible future directions:

- Adopt a two-pronged approach to the different high schools in Baltimore: redeploying all CollegeBound advisors to neighborhood schools, while exploring new ways (or leaving this to others) to provide less resource-intensive support to those whose job it is to promote college attendance at the citywide schools.

- Adopt other targeting approaches such as engaging in more active outreach to some high school students, expanding the efforts to reach younger high school (or even middle school) students, focusing upon especially disadvantaged youth, and engaging in continued outreach to those who come into contact with the program in order to keep them actively involved.

- Find additional ways to strengthen the program, such as determining whether a more pro-active role can be played in supporting college students to remain in school through graduation, both for last dollar scholars and others that CollegeBound has helped to get into school.

- Developing a service to help college students in the CollegeBound network with their grades and academic achievement.

- Continue to achieve the right mix of attention devoted to scholarships, on the one hand, and counseling on the other. The results of this study show that the staff are on the frontline of CollegeBound activity. While a future infusion of last dollar scholarship funds is desirable, the "people" side of CollegeBound is likely to make the most difference in poor children's lives.

- Refine the performance measures used in the program to provide additional attention to the less tangible, difficult-to-measure aspects of the CollegeBound advisors' work, such as counseling and encouraging the students. If the program wishes to promote these kinds of activities by advisors, efforts must be made to train staff and reward them for their hard work.

- Take steps to bring CollegeBound into closer synchrony with other programs that promote school-to-work and school-to-college, and become more actively involved in efforts to reform elementary and secondary education systems in Baltimore. With a well-respected presence in the high schools, a non-profit corporation structure free of the burdens of a large school bureaucracy, a strong corps of committed business, philanthropic and civic leaders, as well as skillful advisors, CollegeBound could play a more active role in promoting systemic change in the schools should it choose to pursue this direction.

7.2 Recommendations for Supporters of All College Access Programs

As noted earlier in this summary, we believe that it would be counter-productive for the leaders of college access programs to adopt the same precise program model and administrative structure. Instead, they should be encouraged to try to apply the lessons of this report to their own unique circumstances. One key component of this is building awareness of the variations in program design to enable program planners to make conscious choices reflecting their high schools. Having said this, we believe that efforts should be made to strengthen existing college access programs and to promote creation of new ones in areas where they do not now exist. In particular, cooperative efforts among college access program leaders should be made in the following manner:

- Continue efforts to connect existing college access programs to similar programs, and to work toward broader efforts to reform the K-12 systems in their communities;

- Build upon and upgrade the existing efforts to promote networking among those responsible for college access programs so that they can continue to learn from each other, as they seek to refine and fine-tune their programmatic offerings. In particular, college access program planners, practitioners, and researchers need to continue to work together to share information and to develop the kind of experience and database that will be useful in upgrading existing program efforts and demonstrating the effectiveness of the programs to would-be supporters and donors in a wide variety of settings.

- Utilize research techniques such as those employed in this study to obtain a clearer picture of the schools and types of students for whom these kinds of approaches are most likely to be effective.